

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 2, 2010. After entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 2-6 and 8-20 are in the application, of which claims 9 and 11 are the independent claims. Claims 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 10 are amended herein. Claims 1 and 7 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-8 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 2002-141403 (“Tatsuya”). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 11-20 are allowed and that claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In this regard, claim 9 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 1 and 7. Claims 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 have been correspondingly amended to depend from claim 9. No new matter is believed to be added herein. In view of the foregoing, claim 9 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-6, 8, and 10 are dependent from claim 9 discussed above and therefore are believed to be allowable over the applied reference for at least similar reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

The absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue, or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue, or comment. In addition, because the

arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be other reasons for patentability of any or all claims that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment or cancellation of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment or cancellation.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 502203 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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